

LIFE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGER

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highly respected. When a letter from a relative in the city arrives, most villagers must go to one of their literate neighbors to have it read.

Today, most village children do complete primary school. Kuo-Yu (Mandarin) is used almost immediately from the first year, even in the rural primary schools. Primary school graduates and those in the lower grades can therefore speak Mandarin. In addition, because of the increased contacts with urban centers and also with Mandarin speakers in the rural areas, most of the young people retain a speaking knowledge of Mandarin. This holds true even for the majority, who remain in the villages and do not go on to middle school.

However, the ability to read Chinese characters is frequently not retained for very long. Primary school graduates can usually read simple texts, although much of this material is often memorized. Even those who do fairly well in reading forget characters very quickly unless they go on to middle school or continue to take an interest in reading after graduation. The reading of simple material soon becomes difficult with lack of practice.

Unfortunately, the primary schools, whose books and courses of study are furnished by the provincial government, make no attempt to teach the children material which would equip them to read simple agricultural magazines. Consequently, the upper classmen or primary school graduates who try to read *Harvest Magazine*, a useful agricultural magazine for the farm population, have found even this simplified though specialized material frustrating. Most of the young people who do make an attempt soon give up and all too often read almost nothing at all. The end result is that several years after they graduated from primary school, many of these young people are again functionally illiterate.

In Hsin Hsing village only a few primary school graduates go on to junior and finally senior middle school each year. They usually go to a community school in Lukang, since it is located close to the village. Students attending this school can live at home and make the three-mile trip each way by bus or bicycle. During the period of this research, the two Hsin Hsing village girls attending middle school went to the Lukang school, along with three boys from the village. A few other boys attended middle schools near Chang-hua, less than ten miles from the village, and one village boy was studying at a middle school in Taichung about twenty-five miles away. The boys at the Chang-hua and Taichung schools had to live away from home.

The Lukang middle school gives a general education; the one near Chang-hua gives specialized training in agriculture; the Taichung school is considered academically superior to the others. All middle schools, however, charge tuition and can be entered only after passing

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966

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Taiwan AD6

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554 other girl was not interested in continuing her education after graduation from primary school and so first attended a sewing school in the area, then went to work in Taipei under the guidance of a relative, and was finally called home where she began to make clothes for pay. Since this girl's family did not need the income from her work, she did not take the work seriously and spent much time amusing herself in the village and in Lukang where her older married sister lived. Although the girl's father was extremely strict with his sons, even with one who was married and himself a father, this daughter was allowed a great amount of freedom.

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The sexes begin to be more and more segregated once village children reach the age of eight or so, and this continues on throughout adulthood. It is, of course, much less true for those who attend middle school, where there is much more opportunity for boys and girls to do things together. However, except for a few occasions when they work side by side, as in weeding operations, the ordinary village adolescents have little contact with others of the opposite sex, particularly in public places.

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The sight of a boy and girl together in public can be the basis for all kinds of rumors about the nature of their relationship. The fear of criticism and ridicule by fellow villagers is more than enough to prevent open associations. However, there is frequently talk in the village about secret love affairs between young villagers. Sometimes such young people are actually seen together near the river in the dark of night, and their secret meeting is immediately publicized in the village. According to many villagers, the talk precipitated by such relationships has been the cause of those marriages arranged between Hsin Hsing villagers.

CONSCRIPTION

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Since about 1953, young Taiwanese as well as mainlanders have been conscripted into the Nationalist Chinese armed forces. The length of service is normally two years, and the usual and preferred draft age is twenty-two. However, as late as 1958, twenty-nine-year-old married men with families who had somehow not been called up earlier were still being inducted into the service. Supposedly, a married man with a family is drafted only if his nuclear family is part of a joint family. Sometimes, however, even if the joint family is divided a man may be drafted if the local public officials feel that the man's brothers can help support his family. Each district has its own quota of conscripts.

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For purposes of communication and training it is important that the soldier have some fluency in Kuo-Yu. However, there are many boys in the rural area who either never went to school or who did not

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966

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complete their education and so speak little if any Kuo-yu. Therefore, sometime during the preconscription age of twenty to twenty-two the government requires all males who have not completed primary school to attend special Kuo-Yu classes at the local primary school. The local police see to it that these boys attend the classes by imposing fines on the families of the negligent.

In general, the villagers disapprove of forced military service and deeply resent the conscription of men with families. The service imposes many hardships on the families, since it means a loss of farm labor and actual income. While the government assumes some financial responsibility for the families of such men, the aid is slow in coming, and when it does arrive, it is usually insufficient. Moreover, the soldier's pay is so small that rural families have to send their sons or husbands in the army additional spending money almost every month.

In addition to their concern about the hardships conscription imposes on the families, the villagers also fear for the safety of their sons and husbands. Many of the boys from the area are stationed on the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, rightly considered dangerous places. However, in spite of the many problems, one attitude the villagers express, at least in public, is that "like taxes, military service is every man's duty."

In most instances, before a group of villagers leaves to begin service in the army, several functions are held to "send the men off." The night before the departure a village *pai-pai* is held in which the gods are asked to speed the safe return of the conscripts. Every village family participates, each bringing a basket of sacrifice foods to the court of one of the larger village *tsu* houses. Here a shaman (*sa shih*) performs a ritual, inviting the gods to come and partake of the food offerings. At the conclusion of the ritual, each family takes its own food home and eats it for their evening meal.

That same night before the men leave, a large subscription dinner may be held in honor of the draftees. While every village family participates in the *pai-pai*, many families do not take part in this large dinner. Usually, only families which are friendly with the draftees' families will pay the subscription price and send a representative to attend. The representative may be the family head himself or a young son of sixteen years or more. One or two of the village men who earn extra income as cooks on various occasions prepare this dinner at no charge, and several village men and/or boys volunteer to serve the food. Some of the women usually help in the kitchen. At the dinner there is a good deal of drinking and drinking games, joking, and storytelling. In addition, some of the more respected *tsu* leaders or elected officials make speeches.

The next morning the men are sent off by most of the village. The

648 from the other; or if the farmers' association small unit
[631] head is from one faction, the vice head is from the other.
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Many of the men but only a few women learned some
871 Japanese and several became quite fluent. A Japanese
648 school was established in Pouti near the police station
and a small percentage of the villagers, primarily male,
were permitted to attend. It appears that although there
were increases as time passed, total attendance never
exceeded fifty per cent of those in the requisite age
groups. Secretly and illegally, a Chinese school was
operated in the village but seldom did more than 15 stu-
dents attend regularly.

648 Economically, there were many improvements. The
177 narrow path to Hsin Tien soon became a one lane dirt road.
[491] Coal mines were started in the immediate area and a very
[316] narrow gauge railroad was built from the mines into Hsin
[496] Tien just before World War I. Both road and railroad
[245] improved communication with Hsin Tien. Tea plantations,
common in Northern Taiwan, were introduced to T'ai-
[245] the time the railroad was built. Citrus orchards started
to replace tea during World War II. Improved seed varie-
[242] ties, fertilizer, insecticide, and farming techniques in-
[494] creased agricultural income a great deal. The Japanese
introduced farming cooperatives in the nineteen twenties
which increased the flow of information to the village.

494 their families are permitted to ride. The narrow-gauge railroad was eliminated and coal is now hauled by trucks.

655 The government Wine and Tobacco Monopoly was establishing a branch tobacco processing factory half way between Talei

[464] Li and Hsin Tien just as we were leaving Taiwan. This was expected to open additional employment opportunities in the immediate area.

511 Sanlei village is now enjoying its greatest economic prosperity according to all objective indicators. Moreover, health care is better than ever before in history and the death rate is at its lowest point (see next section). Educational opportunities too have reached a

648 peak. Nevertheless, the period of the Japanese occupation

829 has been greatly romanticized. Men over 35 are proud of

[191] their ability to speak Japanese and a few long for the

[186] return of the Japanese. Middle-aged villagers argue that they have been ruled by "outsiders" for a long period of

648 time, first the Japanese and then the Mainlanders. More-

829 over, many agree that the Japanese did a better job for

511 they claim under Japanese control, prices were more stable, officials were more honest, and one did not fear robbers.

One fifty-year old man in a group once said that when the Japanese were here, one day's labor paid for three day's basic living but that now it took two day's labor to pay for three day's basic living. The group all nodded in

agreement. Since this statement failed to accord with the

Languages

- 191 Sanlei is a multi-lingual community. No one lang-
197 uage is sufficient to communicate with everyone although
Taiwanese (min-nan hua) comes very close. All village
children speak Taiwanese most of the time. In casual
conversations, in village affairs, and in religious ob-
servances the utilization of Taiwanese is usual. Use of
another language is restricted to "special occasions"
such as dealing with government officials, but even here,
if villager and official are both Taiwanese, employment
of Taiwanese is likely. We started with Mandarin but as
we learned a little Taiwanese, our efforts in Taiwanese
were greatly applauded.

- 197 Mandarin is the official language in the schools.
872 Since attendance is compulsory, almost all children are
exposed to six years of language training. Several Main-
lander teachers in the school refuse to speak Taiwanese
at any time and a few know no more than a few polite
phrases and do not care to learn any more. Many village
women are unable to converse at all with their childrens'
teachers. In the li school, only the first grade teacher
permits use of any Taiwanese in class.

- 191 Several of the older men, especially the more in-
192 fluent ones, but no older women, have learned Mandarin
[562] in order to deal with the government and conduct business.
Much of the acquired facility in Mandarin will be lost

- 191 soon after graduation from grade school unless the grad-
197 uate works in town. Mandarin and Taiwanese are usually
misalled "Chinese dialects" even though they are not
mutually intelligible (Fairbank and Reischauer, 1958:17).
- 191 Because of the aforementioned Mainlander-Taiwanese antag-
197 onism, children do not employ Mandarin outside of school.
186 Mandarin is seemingly equated with Mainlanders. A few
people, otherwise quite friendly, would not speak Mandarin
with us. They understood for they answered my Mandarin
questions in Taiwanese immediately through an interpreter.
According to native Mandarin speakers, the Taiwanese have
an improper accent when speaking Mandarin. The jokes
that are often made about their accents also serve to
inhibit attempts at speaking Mandarin.
- 191 Japanese is the third most important language in
Talei Li. Many men, especially the more influential ones
between the ages of 35 and 60, speak Japanese as do a few
women in the same age range. One woman who speaks Japane-
ese was a teacher in the Japanese school system. She and
her husband are the only two villagers who still speak
Japanese regularly together but they are not teaching it
to any of their ten children. Men seem proud of their
ability in Japanese and were most pleased to display their
talents with our assistants.

There are other minor languages spoken in the vil-
lage. One village woman speaks in addition to Taiwanese

- 191 some Taiyal, an aboriginal language. Five villagers speak
191 Hakka. One Mainlander speaks Cantonese and another
197 Hainanese, although both men speak Mandarin as well. Only
the Hakka girl who arrived in the village as a bride during
our stay spoke absolutely no Taiwanese. She was bilingual
in Hakka and Mandarin and her husband, in Taiwanese and
Mandarin. Although living in an extended household, she
refused to learn any Taiwanese and was unable to converse
with her mother-in-law. It does appear that Mandarin is
becoming a significant secondary language in spite of some
resistance. At present, villagers consider both literacy
and fluency in Mandarin as requisite for political office,
even on the local level.
- 212 Official government figures place the illiteracy
rate at 23.1% (China Yearbook, 1967:102) but this is
probably greatly underestimated. Everyone in elementary
school, even a first grader, is classified as literate
while those under six are eliminated as usual. If just
the population over 14 is considered, illiteracy exceeds
34%. Moreover, everyone who has completed elementary
school (six years) is classified as literate. Functional
illiteracy is found in the United States among high school
graduates, particularly in the big city ghetto and remote
southern rural areas. Chinese is a much more difficult
language in which to attain and retain literacy than
English (Fairbank and Reischauer, 1958:42). I gave simple

121 faction (discussed later in this Chapter) for several
665 years although, as previously stated, the li leadership
571 changed from "traditional" to "progressive" and back. The
internal differences are relatively swallowed so as to
present a united front at each succeeding level.

Local Officers and Procedures

632 The mayor is responsible for organizing corvee
labor for civic improvement. He is also extremely in-
fluential in li-wide social and religious affairs for,
although each of these has its own independent organizing
committee, he is often an ex officio member and is usually
an important advisor. It is helpful if the mayor has good
relations in town so that political figures will be sym-
[23] pathetic to the community. For example, when an assessor
is sent from town to lower taxes in the event of a natural
disaster, it is considered best if he already has positive
feelings towards the village and a friendly attitude
towards village leaders.

As can be seen from the above requirements, the
mayor must be a persuasive man to be truly effective.

212 Basic qualifications for office include literacy and flu-
191 ency in Mandarin. Although there are no wealth require-
556 ments for office and Talei Li has never had more than one
resident whose primary income was derived from rent, no
poor man such as a farm laborer has ever held a high

[625] participant receives \$4.00 to purchase noodles. As
[435] stated previously, sworn brothers associations sometimes
[573] mount the patrol in other periods on their own initiative
as a community service without any contributions.

Once a month, the I Ching go to the police station
in Fouti for training conducted by the policeman assigned
to the li with the help of other officers in the station.
Occasionally, a high ranking officer from Hsin Tien comes
in to give a pep talk. The efficiency of the force and
the degree of assistance obtained is purely dependant on
the kind of relationship the policeman is able to estab-
lish with villagers. Although considerable force and
power is his by virtue of his office, villagers can make
his job relatively easy or very difficult. The previous
policeman had been stationed in Sanlei for many years and
[648] had excellent relations with villagers. Most police are
Mainlanders, one of whom was assigned shortly after our
study began. Since he only spoke a few words of
Taiwanese and those with an accent, he was having a
difficult time. Many villagers speak no Mandarin and
several that know some Mandarin refuse to speak it.

[190] 434 If a thief is captured, the I Ching on duty get a
reward of \$120.00 each (more than two days regular pay)
and the policeman in charge of the li gets a citation
of merit. One third of the reward comes from the
donations, one third from the police station in Hsin
Tien, and one third from the main police station in